

**RFP CCFC 7001 Statewide Research and Evaluation Project
Written Questions Submittal – Revised Handout
November 28, 2005**

Please note that two items have been revised (#3 and #51) and are highlighted for reference.

General/Administrative Information: Questions/Answers

1. Why does the bid not allow nonprofits or the universities to bid as prime? Further, can a university or a nonprofit be a subcontractor?

A. This proposal does allow nonprofits and universities to bid as the prime contractor for this proposal.
Yes, a university or a nonprofit can be a subcontractor.
2. Page 18 of the RFP states, "The total costs of all tasks and milestones cannot exceed the budgeted amount of \$21 million." Page 22 of the RFP states, "It is anticipated that the total 3-year cost of this proposal should not exceed \$20 million." Can the California Children and Families Commission please clarify the correct level of effort for the project?

A. The total cost of the contract agreement cannot exceed \$21 million as stated on page 18.
3. Will selected contractor be able to submit and negotiate alternate contractual language for "Copyrights and Ownership of Products" clause in Exhibit E of Standard Agreement? Asked another way -- Can a document containing the full research findings of the evaluation be published and publicly disseminated?

A. No. CCFC's standard contractual language in the Standard Agreement including the "Copyrights and Ownership of Products" clause in Exhibit E is not negotiable and will not be changed. Exhibit D, Special Term and Conditions and Exhibit E, Additional Provisions provide standard language, and is used in all of CCFC's standard contract agreements.
4. Will there be a call-in number to attend the mandatory pre-proposal conference on November 21, 2005 at 10:00 AM by teleconference?

A. No. There will no teleconference. The pre bid conference is mandatory and attendance is required.
5. Is there a percentage requirement for DVBE participation? and if so, what is the percent?

- A. Yes. The State of California established a DVBE participation goal of at least 3%. Prime contractors must achieve the minimum DVBE participation goal or demonstrate they made a "Good Faith Effort" to achieve participation. (See DVBE handout)
6. Page 18 Cost Detail also indicates that the maximum budgeted amount is \$21 million, while on page 22 under the Evaluation Criteria for Cost, the figure of \$20 million dollars was used. Could the CCFC clarify this possible discrepancy in the estimated size of the contract?
- A. See #2 above.
7. On page 18, Section 4) of the RFP it states, "the total costs of all tasks and milestones cannot exceed the budgeted amount of \$21 million." On page 22 under the cost rating/scoring the second sentence is, "It is anticipated that the total 3-year cost of this proposal should not exceed \$20 million." Is the total of the contract not to exceed \$20 million or \$21 million?
- A. See #2 above.
8. Exhibit D of the standard agreement includes a Termination for Convenience clause. Exhibit E also includes a slightly different Termination for Convenience clause. Could you clarify?
- A. CCFC will strike the Termination for Convenience in Exhibit E.
9. Can the budgets for the proposal be based on First 5 California's fiscal year rather than contract year? For example, Year 1 would go from May 1, 2006 to June 30, 2006. Then Year 2 and Year 3 would be from July 1, 2006-June 30, 2007 and July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008, respectively, and Year 4 would run from July 1, 2008-April 2009 (end of contract).
- A. The budgets must be based on First 5 California state fiscal year. The example is correct. State fiscal year is July 1, through June 30th of the following year.

Program Information: Questions/Answers

10. Is there an expectation that there be a physical Center for Results to which people could come to? If so, is there a requirement of where that facility would need to be?
- A. No, the Center for Results is not expected to exist in a physical Location but it can.

11. Given that this is a 3 year 21 million effort, could one allocate the budget according to project requirements even if it meant one of the year's might have significant financial requirements?

A. Yes, the budget should reflect anticipated expenditures per year, which may fluctuate over the three years of the contract.

12. Can the SREP contractor also bid on Technology contract? Can the SREP contractor bid on other state evaluations (e.g., evaluation of CARES)? Can they also be in the local evaluation business (e.g., Can contractor also be a local evaluator for county commissions)?

A. Yes to all of these questions. None of these situations, given the information provided, constitute an obvious conflict of interest. However, the State reserves the right to determine when a conflict of interest does exist. See Exhibit D of the Standard Agreement for the contract language regarding conflicts of interest.

13. How much input will the evaluation contractor have in defining the scope of work and directing the work of the technology contractor so that the work between the technology team is coordinated and supports the evaluation?

A. The evaluation contractor will not have input into defining the scope of work for the technology contractor since the scope of work will need to be developed before the evaluation contractor is selected. Both the evaluation contractor and the technology contractor, as part of their contracts, will be required to coordinate their work to support the evaluation.

14. Are there any restrictions on the use of data or publication of reports? Does the State Commission and Center for Results just need an opportunity to review and give input before releasing publications or do they get decide whether findings even get published or how they **must** be changed?

A. Yes, there are restrictions on the use of data and publications and we do retain the right to final approval of publications and/or reports. As stated in Exhibit E, Sections 1 and 2 of the State Contract, the State Commission will be the owner of all rights, title, and interest in, not limited to all Products created, provided, or developed under the Agreement, whether or not published or produced. This also governs data files and databases. However, it is in the best interest of the State Commission to produce and distribute a variety of reports and publications to a range of audiences and would work cooperatively with the contractor to do so.

15. Can Technical Assistance (TA) be budgeted as a separate task? It will be difficult to divide TA costs by each of the four Task areas.

A. The budget can be organized in any way deemed appropriate, as long as it includes all of the tasks and subtasks and corresponds to the proposal's outline of the Work Plan and Work Schedule (see page 18 of the RFP).

16. Some activities are listed under more than one task. In which task do you budget the cost for designing and implementing an activity if it is mentioned in more than one task? Please advise which tasks the following activities belong in:

- "Designing and conducting a SR longitudinal study" (listed both as "E" under Task 3 and "F" under Task 5)
- "Design and conduct a SR and PFA longitudinal study-"F" under Task 5 in Attachment 1 (but listed separately as "I" under Task 3 and "C" under Task 4 in Attachment 1, respectively)
- In every task there are activities to incorporate data into the Annual Report and in the Center for Results task all of these activities to incorporate data are mentioned again.

A. See #15 above.

17. Some activities are listed in the RFP and not in Attachment 1 as part of the Scope of Work and some activities from the RFP are combined into one activity or separated into two activities in Attachment 1. Should the outline of the proposal follow the RFP or Attachment 1? (For example: Activity C in Task 1 [p.9] is listed as activities D and E in Attachment 1 [under Task 1] and activities E and F in Task 2 [p.11] are not listed in Attachment 1 [under Task 2].)

A. The proposal should respond to all items in the RFP and SOW. The SOW is a part of the RFP. In addition, the RFP asks for specific details about how the contractor would approach some of the requirements of the SOW. The responses will be used to demonstrate to the State reviewers the methods and/or approaches the contractor will employ to address specific activities. This provides the State an opportunity to understand and assess how the contractor will address and manage activities that are part of the SOW.

In response to your examples: RFP Task 1C is asking you to describe a preliminary plan of how you would go about incorporating research and evaluation reports into the Center for Results and the Annual Report. Our

goal is to see what strategies and methods you would use to accomplish these tasks. In Exhibit 1 SOW we have separated the Annual Report and the Center for Results because they are two separate tasks that will need to be completed. The submitted work plan and timeline should address those two tasks. In the RFP under Task 2 D (methodology/ies for the analysis of the 3 levels of data) and E (review of required data) are found in Appendix 1 SOW under Task 2 A, E, and F. Again the RFP asks how you would approach the tasks so we are able to assess your strategies and methodology/ies.

In summary, the RFP is requesting two types of responses: (1) examples that demonstrate your approach to specific types of research and evaluation activities, and (2) a work plan, deliverables, timeline and budget that addresses all the items in the SOW.

18. Even though the technology piece is not included, the scope of work includes many more activities than the last contract. For example, it now includes two longitudinal studies, three comparison studies, a cost benefit study, the SNP evaluation, the PFA evaluation, 2 years of KEP data collection with an increased sample size, continued technical assistance to counties with more support for counties to support and review local evaluations, more dissemination activities, and more monitoring and summarizing of 100% state-funded activities. This increased scope of work is not reflected in a similar increase to the amount of the award. How should the proposer approach preparing the budget?
 - A. See # 15 above.
19. Can a list of the specific deliverables be provided to proposers to aid in preparing a work plan, timeline, and budget? What is considered a deliverable is not clear under each of the tasks and subtasks on pages 9-16.
 - A. Proposers should use the information provided in the RFP to develop a work plan, deliverables, timeline and budget.
20. It is unclear whether recommendations in the New Framework that were not included in the RFP must be included in the proposal (e.g., Illustration 4.2 on page 20). Do all recommendations in the New Framework need to be included in the proposal or only those mentioned in the RFP?
 - A. The Framework is the guiding document for the RFP. The referenced illustration 4.2 is reflected on page 11 Task 3B. Please see response #17.

21. Are the nationally known experts who gave input on the new evaluation framework (page 14) eligible to bid on or participate in the contractor's proposal?
- A. Yes. The nationally known experts presented material and answered questions only about the process of conducting large-scale evaluation efforts. Their expertise was used as one source to educate the evaluation workgroup about issues in evaluation research and to provide background. They had no input into the development of the framework, the framework was developed by the workgroup. These activities do not constitute a conflict of interest. However, the State reserves the right to determine when a conflict of interest does exist. See Exhibit D of the Standard Agreement for the contract language regarding conflicts of interest.

Questions on Evaluation Tasks:

100% State Funded:

22. Can First 5 provide a list of the State Contractors, a brief description and due dates of their deliverables, and a copy of the current progress reports format? It is hard to suggest how to change the process and report format for State funded projects without more detail about the current process.
- A. I believe you are referring to pg. 9 Task 1A. This item is asking to provide a general plan, not specific details, about how you would approach this task. Please refer to #17. Completing this task should be addressed in your work plan, deliverables, timeline, and budget.
23. Will the SREP contractor be responsible for requesting and analyzing these projects' fiscal data and progress on their scopes of work? Will the SREP contractor need to develop easier ways for PMD staff to collect and analyze this information?
- A. No, the SREP contractor will not be responsible for requesting and analyzing progress on another contractor's SOW. Each contract has a project manager within the State Commission that monitors adherence and progress of the SOW. The SREP contractor, along with the State's research and evaluation staff, will be responsible for incorporating project results/outcomes into the Center for Results and the Annual Report.

100% County Funded:

24. What is meant by “3 levels of data collection” (described on Task D, page 10)?
- A. The “3 levels of data” are: 1) descriptive (accountability) data, 2) outcome data, and 3) information produced through in-depth research and evaluation. These levels are described in the chart on page 7 of the RFP. For a more detailed explanation, refer to pages 5 and 6 of the referenced document, “Statewide Evaluation Framework: Final Draft,” attached to the RFP.
25. If a program receives funds from County Commission funding and also from one or more of the jointly-funded initiatives (e.g., SR, SNP, PFA), are they required to collect all the data for both 100% county funded and jointly-funded programs? If the annual progress report formats are different (page 9, Task 1-A and page 10, Task 2-A), what will be required for reporting for these programs?
- A. With the exception of the School Readiness Initiative, jointly-funded projects will follow the individual requirements of the evaluation design associated with the specific jointly-funded project.
26. Will the Center for Results have as part of their charge to recommend what kinds of specific local evaluation studies they would like to see County Commissions undertake?
- A. No.

School Readiness Initiative:

27. Please clarify the “3 levels of data” (described in Task 3D on page 11).
- A. See #24 above.
28. How is the Center for Results involved in review, input and approval of the subtasks in Task 3?
- A. The Center for Results will operate in the same manner for all listed tasks and subtasks, including the subtasks in Task 3. The selected contractor will be an active partner in the Center for Results with the other entities listed on page 6 of the RFP. For further details about the operation of the Center for Results, refer to pages 25-30 of the referenced document, “Statewide Evaluation Framework: Final Draft,” attached to the RFP.

29. The RFP states that the Kindergarten Entry Profile (KEP) study will be conducted in Year 1 and Year 3 of the contract. Year 1 starts in May 2006. How is it possible to do the KEP in Year 1 when school starts in July in many of the schools? It is not possible to recruit schools and begin training teachers and data collection without at least a 4-6 month start-up period.

A. The current contractor will do the preliminary work for this study. The selected contractor will be required to continue the work by replicating the methods and data collection of the KEP study design.

30. How can aggregated outcome data (School Readiness and other joint funded) be analyzed? If outcome data are aggregated, the unit of analysis will be the county or the SR application rather than participants. Therefore, there is likely not to be enough statistical power to show any significant findings. Also, how can aggregate outcome data be in compliance with the Principles on Equity? How can aggregate outcome data be disaggregated by ethnicity, special need status, or other important demographic groups? Is it possible to create tools that protect anonymity but allow programs to submit individual-level data that include client demographics and intake/follow-up outcome data?

A. We understand the limitations of aggregate data. Counties will be reporting accountability data as described in the Framework (pg. 37) that includes aggregate data on populations served by age, special needs, ethnicity and primary language. The special studies will provide the more in-depth, statistically significant outcome data.

31. How will the KEP data be linked to data on who has received SR program services if County Commissions are submitting aggregate service and outcome data? Will this information come from parent self-report of involvement in SR programs or will SR programs be required to submit identifying information on participants that can later be matched to children in the KEP?

A. Parent self-report is one possible solution to that challenge. In addition, special research studies, including the longitudinal study, will allow us to track children through the elementary years and link to the KEP data. The KEP is currently used as trend data for planning and development of programs to meet the needs of children living in school readiness program areas.

32. Does the KEP include surveys of school personnel about school and community readiness for children (i.e., surveys of superintendents, principals, and teachers)?
- A. Yes
33. What are the “National School Readiness Indicators” (page 24 of the Evaluation Framework document)?
- A. The National School Readiness Indicators are a list of 23 core indicators of school readiness, developed by a 17-state partnership. The list is available in *Getting Ready: Findings from the National School Readiness Indicators Initiative*, published in February 2005, prepared by Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, which can be found on the Internet at <http://www.gettingready.org/matriarch>.
34. Task 3, part D, identical to Task 2, part B, except that the former refers to programs receiving SR Initiative funding and the latter refers to programs receiving county funding?
- A. No, the two tasks are not identical. Task 2B pertains to the development of a process to identify and disseminate best practices, model programs, and/or innovative strategies; whereas Task 3D pertains to the selection of data analysis methodologies.
35. Will County Commissions be allowed to submit data via exports? If so, what types of data will be provided via exports?
- A. Yes. Each county and the Technology Contractor will determine the types of data and the means of export.

Other Jointly Funded:

36. What is the “Special Needs Project (SNP) annual evaluation reports”? Is this a separate report or a chapter in the Annual Report to the Legislature?
- A. This will be a Chapter in the Annual Report but could also be used as a stand alone document.
37. Should some funds from the SREP contract be allocated for contractor “to work cooperatively with other State Commission contractors evaluating

joint-funded programs other than SNP and PFA” (“G” on page 13) or will additional First 5 funds be available?

A. Additional funds will not be available. It is not expected that “working cooperatively” would require any significant funding but that the Contractor would use these other state evaluation contractors as resources when developing special studies, completing the Annual Report or incorporating results into the Center for Results.

Center for Results:

38. Who will make the final decision about the SREP contractor’s scope of work and final approval of deliverables (e.g., study design, instruments and data collection tools, publications, dissemination products)? What is the process for approval of evaluation activities? How will changes in the timeline due to Center for Results’ and state reviews and input affect the contractor’s timeline and deliverables that are specified in the contract that is awarded?

A. The final decision about the SREP SOW was made by First 5 California’s Executive Director and the Evaluation Workgroup. The details of the actual SREP contract will be based on the successful proposal’s work plan, timeline, deliverables and budget and will be finalized by the State’s Administrative and Research staff. Oversight of evaluation activities is part of the Center for Results. We understand that the timeline is a best “guess” on the contractor’s part and that unforeseen delays and challenges occur. We know there may be a need for some flexibility. Any request for changes in the timeline and/or deliverable dates will be reviewed by State staff and possibly referred to the Steering Committee.

39. Please clarify which list of questions represents the stakeholders “top questions.”

A. Stakeholders’ top questions are listed on page 14 of the referenced document, “Statewide Evaluation Framework: Final Draft,” attached to the RFP:

- 1) Who and how many are served?
- 2) How much is being spent?
- 3) On what? Who is providing services?
- 4) Is First 5 efficient?
- 5) What results are being achieved?

40. If the contractor designs a study that has a particular sampling plan, are County Commission and program participation required or voluntary? How will the contractor be able to ensure that the sampling plan can be

implemented in the counties and programs selected so that there will be scientific credibility of the results?

A. All study designs and sampling plans will be reviewed and approved by the Steering Committee with support of an advisory group. Participation in an approved study design will be required.

41. What do you mean by “process evaluation” and “modeling” as research methods (p. 15; H)?

A. The term “process evaluation” is often used interchangeably with the term “program monitoring,” and is defined as the systematic examination of program coverage and delivery; an assessment of a project’s conformity to its design. By “modeling,” we mean the development of statistical models to analyze data.

42. What are the research questions that you are interested in answering with the cost-benefit study? How long are children expected to be followed before cost-benefit statements can be made? For example, in the case of Perry Preschool project, participants were followed for 37 years.

A. In response to this RFP, potential contractors are being asked to address the planning steps they would use to design and conduct a cost-benefit study that could be implemented in Year 2 of the project to show the value of First 5’s investments. The focus of the actual study has not yet been determined, and will be decided by the Center for Results, of which the selected contractor will be an active participant.

43. For the SR Initiative and PFA longitudinal studies, what particular sample size are you expecting? Does the sample need to be generalize to the State, a few counties, or a specific type of program? How early do you want to start tracking participants and for how long should they be followed?

A. Because of the variety of SR programs we anticipate that the study will not be designed to generalize across the state but designed to look at a more defined population that could be specific programs, strategies, modalities, child populations, regions, etc. The study design and implementation will be in the first year of the contract and will be followed for at least 14 years.

44. Will a proposed design that combines various studies listed in the RFP (e.g., comparison studies, cost benefit studies, longitudinal studies, KEP studies, and demonstration site studies) be considered responsive to the RFP?

A. Yes.

Technical Assistance:

45. How much and what types of local evaluation support is the SREP contractor expected to provide? Are there limits to the amount and types of support that can be provided? If so, what are they?

A. We have not set any limits on the amount or type of support to be provided. It is expected that TA for local evaluation support will be provided in several different ways that could include regional meetings around specific topics, evaluation tools/guides, help line, teleconferences, etc.

46. How does county requested technical assistance differ from providing technical assistance to ensure responsiveness of data collection, accuracy and quality of data submitted, and timeliness of submission of data?

A. They are very overlapping. The contractor is expected to monitor the required data submission process for all counties. If a county is struggling with the actual collection of the data, the contractor must have a system to assist them in developing and using an appropriate evaluation process. Please see # 45 above.

47. In the first paragraph at the top of page 9, the RFP indicates the contractor is expected to submit a preliminary plan, process and/or timeline as part of the proposal. This appears to be different than a plan of how the work will be accomplished as that is noted separately in the next paragraph. Can you please distinguish the plan called for in the first paragraph from the project plan (approach) described in the second paragraph?

A. The proposal should include a detailed work plan with appropriate deliverables, timeline and budget for the entire project. Furthermore, where applicable, as indicated by bold lettering under each task, the proposal should include descriptions of the strategies, activities, etc. that would address the activities mentioned to give the State an understanding of how the potential contractor will manage them. Please see #17 above.

48. The RFP states that an information technology contractor will be secured to execute data management activities with existing tech systems. Since most of the activities of the research and evaluation project and most importantly for the Center for Results, pivot on the functionality of this system, and the activities of the information technology contractor: can you provide more information about their role, responsibilities, and scope of work, as well as the timing of that contract?

Will the center for results be allowed to develop and use technology that will allow it to connect with counties, and communities for the purposes of disseminating products, results, best practices, or is this seen as all being mediated and controlled by California First 5 Commission?

A. We are working toward timing the beginning of that that contract to coincide with the dates of the evaluation contract. However, prior to releasing that RFP, we will need to complete a technology needs assessment, so the exact timing and scope of work are unknown at this time.

Yes, the Center for Results will be allowed to develop and use technology in support of its activities.

49. SRI and its subcontractors are currently conducting the evaluation of First 5 funded programs and the evaluation of the First 5 California School Readiness Initiative. Are they (SRI and its subcontractors) eligible to bid on the current RFP?

A. Yes.

50. Page 8 of the RFP indicates that “the selected evaluation contractor will be required to coordinate its data management work with the information technology contractor and to cooperate in any revisions of the Proposition 10 Evaluation Data System.” The web link indicates the current data system contract is also being held by SRI and its subcontractors. Is this contract part of the evaluation contract held by the SRI team or is this a separate contract? Further, what is nature of the roles and relationships between the successful bidders on the current RFP with the SRI team in order to maximize the coordination of evaluation efforts?

A. The current data system is a part of the current evaluation contract with SRI. The successful bidders will be given all of the resources developed by SRI and submitted as deliverables to CCFC.

51. Page 18 of the RFP, under Cost Detail, indicates that “The State will only pay for hours actually worked at the rates submitted in the “Cost Proposal” and for actual expenses incurred, even if the amount of the charges is less than the total proposal amount.” Is the CCFC suggesting a Time and Materials (T&M) type of contract or did it have another type of contract in mind?

A. Neither. What this language is saying is the state will only pay for actual work performed regardless of the total amount of the contract. Example, if the total amount of the contract is \$60,000 and the total billing equals \$40,000, that is All (\$40,000) the contractor will be paid.

52. The Rating/Scoring Criteria do not explicitly give credit for prime contractors who currently have a presence within the State of California, although one of the desired qualifications states the need for having high availability and these qualifications “are included in the scoring process” (page 17). Where is this criterion reflected in the rating/scoring criteria for proposals (pages 21-22)? To what extent, if any, will bidding teams where the prime contractor currently has a statewide presence be given a higher score over a prime contractor which does not have a statewide presence, even if subcontractors on the latter contractor’s team may be based within the state? Further, can the prime contractor’s past or present experience within the state of California be used to achieve a full score for this criterion?

A. The scoring is based solely on the information in the contractor’s proposal, which includes qualifications of project staff and the firm.

The qualification you are referencing is part of the following scoring criteria (RFP pg. 21-22):

2nd bullet under Qualifications of Project Staff

1st bullet under Qualifications of the Firm

3rd bullet under Qualifications of the Firm

Potential contractors should describe within their proposal how they meet these qualifications. The use of subcontractors would be one example of a strategy to address these criteria, and the contractor’s past or present experience within the state of California would be another example.